

THE
Prophet Joseph Smith
TELLS HIS OWN STORY.



A Brief History of the Early Visions of the
Prophet and the Rise and Progress

OF THE

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

BY

JOSEPH SMITH, HIMSELF.

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ARTICLES OF FAITH

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

1. We helieve in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2. We helieve that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

3. We believe that, through the atonement of Christ, all mankind *may be saved*, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: First, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of Hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

5. We helieve that a man must be called of God, by "prophecy, and by the laying on of hands," by those who are in authority, to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinance thereof.

6. We helieve in the same organization that existed in the primitive church—namely, Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers, Evangelists, etc.

7. We helieve in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

8. We helieve the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9. We believe all that God revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this (the American) continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth, and that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

12. We helieve in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates; in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to *all men*; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul, "We helieve all things, we hope all things," we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.—JOSEPH SMITH.

EXTRACTS FROM THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH

"1. Owing to the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons, in relation to the rise and progress of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, all of which have been designed by the authors thereof to militate against its character as a Church and its progress in the world—I have been induced to write this history, to disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they have transpired, in relation both to myself and to the Church, so far as I have such facts in my possession.

"2. In this history I shall present the various events in relation to this Church, in truth and righteousness, as they have transpired, or as they at present exist, being now the eighth year since the organization of the said Church.

"3. I was born in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five, on the twenty-third day of December, in the town of Sharon, Windsor county, State of Vermont. My father, Joseph Smith, senior, left the State of Vermont and moved to Palmyra, Ontario (now Wayne) county, in the State of New York, when I was in my tenth year, or thereabouts. In about four years after my father's arrival in Palmyra he moved with his family into Manchester, in the same county of Ontario.

"4. His family consisted of eleven souls, namely—my father, Joseph Smith; my mother, Lucy Smith (whose name, previous to her marriage, was Mack, daughter of Solomon Mac^k); my brothers, Alvin

(who died November 19th, 1824, in the 27th year of his age), Hyrum, myself, Samuel Harrison, William, Don Carlos; and my sisters, Sophronia, Catherine, and Lucy.

"5. Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, 'Lo, here!' and others, 'Lo, there!' Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist.

"6. For notwithstanding the great love which the converts to these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy, who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling, in order to have everybody converted, as they were pleased to call it, let them join what sect they pleased—yet when the converts began to file off, some to one party and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued; priests contending against priest, and convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions.

"7. I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian

faith, and four of them joined that church, namely—my mother, Lucy; my brothers Hyrum, Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia.

"8. During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.

"9. My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of either reason or sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

"10. In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself, What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?

"11. While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that*

giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

"12. Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.

"13. At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to "ask of God," concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

"14. So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

"15. After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick

darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

"16. But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvellous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"17. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other—*This is my beloved Son, hear Him!*

"18. My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join.

"19. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.'

"20. He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven.

"21. Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before-mentioned religious excitement; and conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them.

"22. I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me.

"23. It caused me serious reflection then, and often has since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient im-

portance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and it was often the cause of great sorrow to myself.

"24. However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light and heard a voice; but still there were but a few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know to his latest breath, that he had both seen a light and heard a voice speaking unto him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise.

"25. So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it, at least I knew that by so

doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.

"26. I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned; and that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but to continue as I was until further directed. I had found the testimony of James to be true, that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided.

"27. I continued to pursue my common vocations in life until the twenty-first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious, because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision.

"28. During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision and the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three—having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me—I was left to all kinds of temptations; and mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature; which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God.

- "29. In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections; when, on the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and

tollies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him; for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one.

"30. While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

"31. He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom.

"32. Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me.

"33. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.

"34. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from

whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants.

"35. Also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted 'seers' in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

"36. After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi, and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus:

"37. For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

"38. And again he quoted the fifth verse thus: *Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*

"39. He also quoted the next verse differently: *And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.*

"40. In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as

they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ; but the day had not yet come when they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people, but soon would come.

"41. He also quoted the second chapter of Joel, from the twenty-eighth verse to the last. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be. And he further stated that the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of Scripture, and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here.

"42. Again, he told me, that when I got those plates of which he had spoken—for the time that they should be obtained was not yet fulfilled—I should not show them to any person; neither the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim; only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them; if I did I should be destroyed. While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

"43. After this communication, I saw the light in the room begin to gather immediately around the person of him who had been speaking to me, and it continued to do so, until the room was again left dark, except just around him, when instantly I saw, as it were, a conduit open right up into heaven, and he ascended till he entirely disappeared, and the room was left as it had been before this heavenly light had made its appearance.

"44. I lay musing on the singularity of the scene, and marveling greatly at what had been told to me by this extraordinary messenger; when, in the midst of my meditation, I suddenly discovered that my

room was again beginning to get lighted, and in an instant, as it were, the same heavenly messenger was again by my bedside.

"45. He commenced and again related the very same things which he had done at his first visit without the least variation, which, having done, he informed me of great judgments which were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword and pestilence; and that these grievous judgments would come on the earth in this generation. Having related these things, he again ascended as he had done before.

"46. By this time, so deep were the impressions made on my mind, that sleep had fled from my eyes, and I lay overwhelmed in astonishment at what I had both seen and heard. But what was my surprise when again I beheld the same messenger at my bedside, and heard him rehearse or repeat over again to me the same things as before; and added a caution to me, telling me that Satan would try to tempt me (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family), to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building His kingdom; otherwise I could not get them.

"47. After this third visit, he again ascended into heaven as before, and I was again left to ponder on the strangeness of what I had just experienced; when, almost immediately after the heavenly messenger had ascended from me the third time, the cock crowed, and I found that day was approaching, so that our interviews must have occupied the whole of that night.

"48. I shortly after arose from my bed, and, as usual, went to the necessary labors of the day; but, in attempting to work as at other times, I found my strength so exhausted as to render me entirely unable. My father, who was laboring along with me, discovered something to be wrong with me, and told me to go home. I started with the intention of going to the house; but in attempting to cross the fence out of the field where we were, my strength entirely failed me, and I fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything.

"49. The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking unto me, calling me by name. I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before. He then again related unto me all that he had related to me the previous night, and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received.

"50. I obeyed; I returned to my father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger. I left the field and went to the place where the messenger had told me the plates were deposited; and owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there.

"51. Convenient to the village of Manchester, Ontario county, New York, stands a hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood. On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates, deposited in a stone box. This stone box was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the

middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all around was covered with earth.

"52. Having removed the earth, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and there, indeed, did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate, as stated by the messenger. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement. In the bottom of the box were laid two stones crossways of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them.

"53. I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time to bring them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates.

"54. Accordingly, as I had been commanded, I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days.

"55. As my father's worldly circumstances were very limited, we were under the necessity of laboring with our hands, hiring out by day's work and otherwise, as we could get opportunity. Sometimes we were at home, and sometimes abroad, and by continuous labor were enabled to get a comfortable maintenance.

"56. In the year 1824 my father's family met with a great affliction in the death of my eldest brother, Alvin. In the month of October, 1825, I hired with an old gentleman by the name of Josiah Staal, who lived in Chenango county, State of New York. He had heard something of a silver mine having been opened by the Spaniards in Harmony, Susquehanna county, State of Pennsylvania, and had, previous to my hiring to him, been digging, in order, if possible, to discover the mine. After I went to live with him, he took me, with the rest of his hands, to dig for the silver mine, at which I continued to work for nearly a month, without success in our undertaking, and finally I prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging after it. Hence arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger.

"57. During the time that I was thus employed, I was put to board with a Mr. Isaac Hale, of that place; it was there I first saw my wife (his daughter), Emma Hale. On the 18th of January, 1827, we were married, while I was yet employed in the service of Mr. Staal.

"58. Owing to my continuing to assert that I had seen a vision, persecution still followed me, and my wife's father's family were very much opposed to our being married. I was, therefore, under the necessity of taking her elsewhere; so we went and were married at the house of Squire Tarbill, in South Bainbridge, Chenango county, New York. Immediately after my marriage I left Mr. Staal's and went to my father's and farmed with him that season.

"59. At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate. On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as

usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected.

"60. I soon found out the reason why I had received such strict charges to keep them safe, and why it was that the messenger had said that when I had done what was required at my hand, he would call for them. For no sooner was it known that I had them, than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me. Every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to for that purpose. The persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get them from me, if possible. But by the wisdom of God they remained safe in my hands until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand. When, according to arrangement, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight.

"61. The excitement, however, still continued, and rumor with her thousand tongues was all the time employed in circulating falsehoods about my father's family and about myself. If I were to relate a thousandth part of them, it would fill up volumes. The persecution, however, became so intolerable that I was under the necessity of leaving Manchester, and going with my wife to Susquehanna county, in the State of Pennsylvania. While preparing to start—being very poor, and the persecution so heavy upon

us that there was no probability that we would ever be otherwise—in the midst of our afflictions we found a friend in a gentleman by the name of Martin Harris, who came to us and gave me fifty dollars to assist us on our journey. Mr. Harris was a resident of Palmyra township, Wayne county, in the State of New York, and a farmer of respectability.

“62. By this timely aid was I enabled to reach the place of my destination in Pennsylvania; and immediately after my arrival there I commenced copying the characters off the plates. I copied a considerable number of them, and by means of the Urim and Thummim I translated some of them, which I did between the time I arrived at the house of my wife's father, in the month of December, and the February following.

“63. Sometime in this month of February, the aforementioned Mr. Martin Harris came to our place, got the characters which I had drawn off the plates, and started with them to the city of New York. For what took place relative to him and the characters I refer to his own account of the circumstances, as he related them to me after his return, which was as follows:

“64. I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic; and he said they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the

translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthon called me back and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him.

"65. He then said to me, 'Let me see that certificate.' I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying that there was no such thing now as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him, he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, 'I cannot read a sealed book.' I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said respecting both the characters and the translation.

"66. On the 5th day of April, 1829, Oliver Cowdery came to my house, until which time I had never seen him. He stated to me that, having been teaching school in the neighborhood where my father resided, and my father being one of those who sent to the school, he went to board for a season at his house, and while there the family related to him the circumstance of my having received the plates, and accordingly he had come to make inquiries of me.

"67. Two days after the arrival of Mr. Cowdery (being the 7th of April) I commenced to translate the Book of Mormon, and he began to write for me.

"68. We still continued the work of translation, when, the ensuing month (May, 1829), we on a certain day went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates. While we were thus employed, praying

and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:

"69. Upon you, my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the Gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.

"70. He said this Aaronic Priesthood had not the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on us hereafter; and he commanded us to go and be baptized, and gave us directions that I should baptize Oliver Cowdery, and that afterwards he should baptize me.

"71. Accordingly we went and were baptized. I baptized him first, and afterwards he baptized me—after which I laid my hands upon his head and ordained him to the Aaronic Priesthood, and afterwards he laid his hands on me and ordained me to the same priesthood—for so we were commanded.

"72. The messenger who visited us on this occasion and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James, and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchisedek, which Priesthood, he said, would in due time be conferred on us, and that I should be called the first Elder of the Church, and he (Oliver Cowdery) the second. It was on the fifteenth day of May, 1829, that we were ordained under the hand of this messenger, and baptized.

"73. Immediately on our coming up out of the water after we had been baptized, we experienced great and glorious blessings from our Heavenly Father. No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation.

"74. Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the Scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of. In the meantime we were forced to keep secret the circumstances of having received the Priesthood and our having been baptized, owing to a spirit of persecution which had already manifested itself in the neighborhood.

"75. We had been threatened with being mobbed, from time to time, and this, too, by professors of religion. And their intentions of mobbing us were only counteracted by the influence of my wife's father's family (under Divine providence), who had become very friendly to me, and who were opposed to mobs, and were willing that I should be allowed to continue the work of translation without interruption; and therefore offered and promised us protection from all unlawful proceedings, as far as in them lay."

Such is the simple story of the divine calling of the Prophet of the nineteenth century, as told by Joseph Smith himself. He testified of these glorious things, and a few believed his words and were baptized. Thus were the initiatory steps for the establishment of the Church of Christ in completeness of power, gifts and ordinances established. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized on the sixth day of April, 1830, at Fayette, Seneca county, State of New York, and its history has been thrillingly eventful. From the time of its establishment the work has been spread abroad, the faithful Elders going forth, like the ancient disciples, proclaiming the Gospel, raising up and organizing branches. The gifts and power of God have been made manifest, the word being confirmed by signs following the believers.

In 1831, by revelation through Joseph the Seer, the few believers were directed to gather to the State of Ohio, the town of Kirtland being the headquarters of the Church. In the summer of the same year, Joseph Smith and a number of other Elders, by divine command, visited Jackson county, Missouri, which was designated as "Zion."

On April 3rd, 1836, in the Temple erected at Kirtland, the Prophet Joseph and Oliver Cowdery were blessed with a glorious vision of the Savior, whose appearance they described. He signified His acceptance of the Holy House, that had been erected to His name, promising many glorious blessings upon His people, on condition that the Holy Temple be kept free from pollution. They were also visited by Moses, who committed to them the keys of the gathering of Israel and the bringing of the Ten Tribes from the North country. Elias also appeared and bestowed upon them the dispensation of the

Gospel of Abraham; and, lastly, there appeared Elijah the Prophet, who, in fulfilment of the prediction of Malachi, conferred upon Joseph Smith the keys to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, informing them that the great and dreadful day of the Lord was near; and by virtue of the authority conferred upon them at that time, the hearts of those living are turning towards their dead progenitors, and a sympathetic search for genealogy is going on among the Latter-day Saints, to be used by them in the great temples of the Church, where the living perform a work of salvation for the dead.

To follow the believers in the divine mission of Joseph Smith through the terrible storms of persecution to which they were subjected, would consume volumes. Wherever they established themselves they were beset on every side by mobs, who burned or despoiled their homes, in many cases murdered them in cold blood, and committed upon helpless women revolting crimes against chastity. This was particularly the case in Missouri, in which State they subsequently settled, and where they were driven from county to county, and abused with such merciless cruelty, that nothing short of the power of God saved them from annihilation, as an organized body. In fact, the Governor of the State, a wretched person named Boggs, issued an order for the extermination of the Saints, and several thousand volunteers were raised and sent to execute this execrable decree. Joseph Smith and numbers of the leading Elders were thrown into prison where they were offered for food the flesh of their brethren who had been murdered by the mobs. A council of the Volunteer Militia Mobocrats was held in relation to the disposal of Joseph Smith and his brethren. Seventeen sectarian priests, who took part in the murderous work,

were urgent in the demands that they be shot. The commission of this cold-blooded deed was only prevented by General Doniphan threatening to withdraw his regiment and free himself from such devilish doings.

Being driven by ruthless relentless persecution, having been expelled from their homes and last refuge in Missouri, the Saints wended their weary steps to Illinois. Hundreds of them perished during the winter from hunger, cold, and general exposure. They built the beautiful city of Nauvoo, with a population of over 20,000, in Hancock county, Illinois, on the banks of the Mississippi, where they also erected a beautiful temple. They flourished for a time, their numbers being greatly swelled by inflowing immigration from different parts of the Union and from Great Britain.

Again the fierce winds of persecution began to howl, as if the infernal regions had let loose their imps and commissioned them to take possession of the enemies of the people of God. Nothing seemed to satisfy them but the blood of the Prophet, and he seemed to realize it, for on his way to Carthage, Illinois, where he was murdered in cold blood, he said: "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am as calm as a summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men; I shall die innocent, and it shall yet be said of me, 'he was murdered in cold blood.'" Fifty times had he been arrested on trumped up charges, and forty-nine times had he been acquitted by the courts of the land, innocent of any crime. Desperate and maddened by being continually foiled in their wicked designs, the mob finally declared that, "if law couldn't reach them, powder and ball should." On the 27th of June, 1844, while in jail, in the town of

Carthage, and under the protective pledge of the governor of the State, Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and his brother Hyrum, the Patriarch, were cruelly murdered by a furious mob, led by religious fanatics. Appended to the book containing the revelations received from the Lord by the Prophet Joseph, known as the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, is published the following narrative of the "Night of Martyrdom":

MARTYRDOM OF JOSEPH SMITH, THE PROPHET, AND HIS
BROTHER HYRUM.

1. To seal the testimony of this book and the Book of Mormon, we announce the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch. They were shot in Carthage jail, on the 27th of June, 1844, about five o'clock p. m., by an armed mob, painted black—of from 150 to 200 persons. Hyrum was shot first and fell calmly, exclaiming, "I am a dead man!" Joseph leaped from the window, and was shot dead in the attempt, exclaiming, "O Lord my God!" They were both shot after they were dead in a brutal manner, and both received four balls.

2. John Taylor and Willard Richards, two of the Twelve, were the only persons in the room at the time; the former was wounded in a savage manner with four balls, but has since recovered; the latter, through the providence of God, escaped, "without even a hole in his robe."

3. Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more (save Jesus only) for the salvation of men in this world than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, which he

translated by the gift and the power of God, and has been the means of publishing it on two continents; has sent the fulness of the everlasting gospel which it contained to the four quarters of the earth; has brought forth the revelations and commandments which compose this Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and many other wise documents and instructions for the benefit of the children of men; gathered many thousands of the Latter-day Saints, founded a great city, and left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people, and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood—and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!

4. When Joseph went to Carthage to deliver himself up to the pretended requirements of the law, two or three days previous to his assassination, he said, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I SHALL DIE INNOCENT, AND IT SHALL YET BE SAID OF ME—HE WAS MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD." The same morning, after Hyrum had made ready to go—shall it be said to the slaughter? Yes, for so it was—he read the following paragraph, near the close of the twelfth chapter of Ether, in the Book of Mormon, and turned down the leaf upon it:—

5. "And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity. And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me, if they have not charity, it mattereth not unto you, thou hast been faithful; wherefore thy garments are clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness, thou shalt be made strong,

even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father. And now I ———bid farewell unto the Gentiles; yea and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood." The testators are now dead, and their testament is in force.

6. Hyrum Smith was 44 years old, February, 1844, and Joseph Smith was 38 in December, 1843; and henceforward their names will be classed among the martyrs of religion; and the reader in every nation will be reminded that the "Book of Mormon," and this book of Doctrine and Covenants of the church, cost the best blood of the nineteenth century to bring them forth for the salvation of a ruined world: and that if the fire can scathe a *green tree* for the glory of God, how easy it will burn up the "dry trees" to purify the vineyard of corruption. They lived for glory; they died for glory; and glory is their eternal reward. From age to age shall their names go down to posterity as gems for the sanctified.

7. They were innocent of any crime, as they had often been proved before, and were only confined in jail by the conspiracy of traitors and wicked men; and their *innocent blood* on the floor of Carthage jail is a broad seal affixed to "Mormonism" that cannot be rejected by any court on earth; and their *innocent blood* on the escutcheon of the State of Illinois, with the broken faith of the State as pledged by the Governor, is a witness to the truth of the everlasting gospel, that all the world cannot impeach; and their *innocent blood* on the banner of liberty, and on the *magna charta* of the United States, is an ambassador for the religion of Jesus Christ, that will touch the hearts of honest men among all

nations; and their *innocent blood*, with the innocent blood of all the martyrs under the altar that John saw will cry unto the Lord of Hosts, till He avenges that blood on the earth. Amen.

It was fondly hoped that, by the death of the great Prophet, the work he had been commissioned to establish would go out of existence. But it was destined to remain forever. Truth is imperishable. The enemies of the Church redoubled their efforts, thinking they could complete a work of demolition they imagined they had begun. But though, by the machinations of the wicked and the operations of fiendish hate, good and great men may be swept from the earth, the principles they advance remain behind. Men are subject to removal from this sphere, it is true, but truth, eternal truth, is not susceptible to obliteration: "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." Joseph Smith was martyred, but another great man had been prepared to take up the link of the chain, which the wicked fondly hoped had been snapped never more to be welded. The Twelve Apostles, upon the death of Joseph Smith, were the highest authority of the Church. Brigham Young was their President, and recognizing this truth, he was, on December 5th, 1847, selected as president of the whole Church, and as such directed its affairs down to the time of his death in August, 1877.

Mob violence did not cease with the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum. The dogs of war continued to let loose upon the Latter-day Saints until, finally, they had to enter into a compulsory agreement, or written compact, to leave the State of Illinois, and betake themselves to the Western wilds of America,

where it was proudly hoped by their enemies, they would inevitably perish.

The compulsory exodus commenced under the leadership of Brigham Young, in the depth of the winter of 1846, when the friendless wanderers passed through hardships and sufferings, in the midst of ice, snowdrifts and a temperature frequently twenty degrees below zero.

While encamped on the western bank of the Missouri River, the general government sent an agent, calling for 500 of the ablest men among the Mormon exiles to aid the United States in the war against Mexico. These were promptly furnished, showing that accusations of disloyalty made against this despised people were unfounded. To add to the distress of the camp, at this juncture they learned that the sick and infirm who were left behind in Nauvoo, from inability to move with the main body, had been actually driven out of that city at the mouth of the musket and cannon by the brutal, inhuman mob.

On the 24th of July, 1847, the pioneers, led by Brigham Young, entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Successive companies followed, and the cultivation of the soil proceeded. Until the harvest of 1848 many suffered from hunger, living upon small roots and rawhide.

Mammoth volumes might be filled with narratives of the trials, vicissitudes, travels, hardships, afflictions and persecutions to which the Church of Christ has been subjected. We might speak of the difficulties the Latter-day Saints have had to cope with in their present beautiful location in the formerly barren but now smiling and fruitful valleys of the West, beyond the Rocky Mountains; how their crops

have in past years been destroyed by hordes of grasshoppers and crickets, yet they have plodded on their way, rejoicing and trusting in the God of Heaven, who, although He has seen fit to try and prove them, has never deserted them in the hour of need.

Before the advent of Western railroads on the American Continent the pilgrim Saints, with faces turned toward the pastures of the Rocky Mountains, had to traverse, mostly afoot, the broad and almost trackless prairies, over mountains and across rivers and valleys, their baggage and the more feeble of the people being conveyed by wagons hauled by oxen. In 1866 the Latter-day Saints in Utah inspired with deep solicitude for the pilgrims on their weary way westward, with a largeness of heart and generosity that has seldom been equalled, forwarded to the frontiers 500 wagons, with a sufficient number of cattle and men to transport them 1,100 miles—from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City.

By the magic hand of industry, under the blessings of the God of Israel, that Western wilderness has been transformed into a picture of smiling fruitfulness. Besides the beautiful city of Salt Lake—the admiration of passing tourists, who flock there by thousands every year—there are nearly 500 other cities and settlements which “blossom like the rose.”

Temples have been erected in Salt Lake City, St. George, Manti and Logan, at a cost of over seven millions of dollars, besides hundreds of tabernacles and churches scattered throughout that region which represent other millions in money. Thus are the Latter-day Saints manifesting their solicitude for the welfare of the fathers who have gone before, by preparing places wherein they can officiate for them, “That they may be judged according to men in the flesh and live according to God in the spirit.”

Since then thousands of Elders have gone into all parts of the civilized world, traveling as the Apostles of old did, "without purse and without script," crying repentance to the nations, and calling on them to be baptized and escape the "damnation of hell." These Elders have left the farm, the workshop, the forge, the store, and all the comforts of home and loved ones, and gone into Canada, Great Britain, Germany, Holland, France, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, East Indies, Cape of Good Hope, Mexico, South America, South Sea Islands, Sandwich Islands, Jersey Islands, Japan, Turkey and Jerusalem, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people. As a result of their warning voice thousands and tens of thousands have yielded obedience to the Gospel of the Son of God, and the Church now has a membership of over 400,000 souls, and fully that many more have kept the faith and passed beyond the vale, all during the remarkably short space of seventy-five years. There have been six presidents in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as follows: Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith, the present leader of the Church, who was a member of the Quorum of the Apostles for thirty-eight years, and who attained his present position through a long life of faithfulness. At the death of President Lorenzo Snow, his predecessor, he had become the chief Apostle and was finally chosen by the highest quorum in the Church to become the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, as was Brigham Young upon the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith. President Joseph F. Smith is

a son of the Patriarch, Hyrum Smith, who met his death in Carthage jail, June 27th, 1844.

Efforts have been made to destroy the work of God as instituted through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith, and all manner of falsehoods have been circulated against him and his unselfish labors. Especially have the shafts of the Evil One been directed against the Book of Mormon, men having invented all manner of theories as to its origin in order to discredit its divinity. The Solomon Spaulding story is still used by hireling priests, who "lie in wait to deceive." For fifty years and more has this been the stock-in-trade of those who object to the genuineness of this divine record, and notwithstanding these divines (?) know that the story has long ago been exploded, yet they continue to blind the eyes of their followers, because their "craft is in danger" directly the truth dawns on those who are honest in heart.

The Rev. Solomon Spaulding romance is easily told: D. P. Hurlburt, a man who was once a member of the Church, but who, because of his lascivious conduct, was excommunicated, was the originator of the fabrication that the Book of Mormon had its origin in Mr. Spaulding's tale. This man Hurlburt wrote a bitter assault on the Latter-day Saints in 1836, entitled "Mormonism Unveiled," which was published in Ohio. During the time Hurlburt was gathering material for this work, he obtained from the family of the then deceased clergyman the original of the "Manuscript Story," as it was called, but discovering that it would, if published, prove fatal to his assumptions, he suppressed it; and from that time it was entirely lost sight of until the latter part of the year 1884, when a Mr. L. L. Rice, residing at Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, found it among a

numerous collection of miscellaneous papers which he had received from Mr. E. D. Howe, of Painesville, Ohio, the publisher of Hurlburt's "Mormonism Unveiled," when he, with his partner, purchased from that gentleman the business and good will of the *Painesville Telegraph*. In 1884 President James H. Fairchild, of Oberlin College, Ohio, was paying a visit to Mr. Rice, and he suggested that the latter look through his numerous papers, in the hope of finding amongst them some anti-slavery documents of value. In his search he discovered a package marked in pencil on the outside, "Manuscript Story," which, to their surprise, on perusal, proved to be the veritable, long lost romance of Rev. Dr. Spaulding, to which so much undeserved importance had been maliciously given. This manuscript was presented to Oberlin College, but not until an exact copy had been made by Mr. Rice, which has since been published in pamphlet form, and can be purchased at the Deseret News Book Store, Salt Lake City, Utah. Upon comparison it will be found that it does not bear the least resemblance in any manner to the Book of Mormon, and yet it was said that Joseph Smith obtained access to this manuscript and from its scanty pages elaborated this Book of Mormon, which he afterwards palmed upon the world as a divine record.

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